

commodities with reference to the images displayed on the display means, enabling the tele-inventory performed at a remote place from the shop. For example, images of respective selling areas of a department store or images of respective shops located in remote places are transmitted to the head office or the like so that object commodities sold or stocked in the selling areas or in the shops are centralized inventoried from a remote place from the department store or the shops. As a result, the operator can inventory (specifically, count object commodities or check the expiration dates of object commodities) on demand (anytime as demand arises), reducing the cost of an inventory because of a reduced manpower for the inventory.

(2) The operator of the remote management apparatus can issue instructions to clerks disposed at the shop by transmitting the instructions to the shop from the remote management apparatus as required. Therefore it is possible to request the clerks in the shop to perform minimum operations that the operator is unable to perform from a remote place from the shop thereby surely making an inventory from the remote place.

(3) The operator of the remote management apparatus can issue instructions to the camera control means disposed at the shop by transmitting

the instructions to the shop from the remote management apparatus as required in such a manner that the camera means takes an image of a desired object commodity. This allows the operator to

5 remotely obtain various images from the shop, reducing mistakes in counting commodities. It is possible to guarantee a reliable inventory based on the images taken by the camera means.

(4) The operator of the remote management

10 apparatus can control the manipulator control means by transmitting the instructions to the shop from the remote management apparatus as required in such a manner that the manipulator means manipulates a position and a posture of an object commodity. If

15 the operator does not see an object commodity because of the object commodity being behind other commodities or other reasons, the operator can manipulate the other commodities by remotely controlling the manipulator means so as to see the

20 object commodity on the display means. Further, if the operator do not see the expiration date of an object commodity which date is attached the package thereof on the display means, the operator can display the expiration date on the display means

25 by remotely controlling the manipulator means so as to change the position of the object commodity. The remote control of the manipulator means allows

to surely make an inventory based on the taken images without taking a time of clerks disposed at the shop.

(5) Since the shop previously stores a commodity information about a correlation between the individual object commodity and position information about a position of the individual object commodity in the database, it is possible for the operator, even if having no information about the layout of the shop, to obtain an image of the desired object commodity only by transmitting instructions designating the desired object commodity name to the camera control means of the shop, enabling an effective inventory with low costs.

(6) Since object commodities, such as expired commodities, labeled with the predetermined marks, it is possible for the operator to surely count the object commodities, with reference to images of the object commodities labeled with the predetermined marks. At that time, the operator counts the number of object commodities labeled with the predetermined marks (the number of times that the operator points the object commodities using the pointing means) thereby the number of object commodities are automatically counted with further accuracy.

(7) Since a particular commodity, such as an